

Return to Use Initiative 2006 Demonstration Project

Union Chemical Co., Inc.: Hope, Maine

THE SITE: From 1969 until 1984, the 12-acre Union Chemical Company Inc. site was home to a paint and coating stripper formulator that also handled and recovered petrochemical-based solvents. When the State of Maine closed the waste treatment operations in 1984, approximately 2,000 drums and 30 liquid storage tanks containing hazardous waste were stored on the site. The on-site soil and ground water contamination resulted from improper handling and operating practices such as leaking stored drums, spills, and use of a septic tank and a leach field for process wastewater disposal. Cleanup activities have included the decontamination and demolition of the site facilities with off-site disposal, soil vapor extraction, and ground water extraction. Subsequent to the construction of the remedy, the ground water restoration effort has been enhanced by four seasons of in-situ chemical oxidation and two seasons of in-situ chemical reductions.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Cleanup of the source area soils was completed in 1998 and substantial progress has been made in addressing the ground water contamination. As a result, significant portions of the site could be ready for reuse. Although the property is currently held in receivership by the State of Maine, the Town of Hope as well as other parties have made inquiries about the property. The Town of Hope, which is the largest of the three communities near the site, has expressed interest in acquiring the property for use as a fire station.

THE BARRIER: The Town of Hope is concerned they might incur liability if they acquire the site. The Town needs assistance in understanding limitations associated with the property and how they will affect the potential future uses.

THE SOLUTION: EPA and the Town of Hope are working together to develop a project scope that evaluates future land uses that maintain protectiveness and are available under the remedy chosen for the site. In order to address liability concerns, EPA is providing the Town with information about the Superfund liability scheme and landowner protections.

THE SITE NOW: EPA continues to work with the Town of Hope and remove barriers to reuse at the site. Once the project scope is completed, EPA and the Town of Hope will initiate a community involvement process to ensure comprehensive community input.

EPA is also working with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to perform quantitative geophysical work at two bedrock wells on the property in order to determine whether one of the wells could function as a source of potable water if and when the site is redeveloped. A schedule has not been finalized, but the expectation is that the field work would be performed in the summer of 2007 and USGS would prepare a report by 2008. The results of this study will allow EPA and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to fine-tune the use of the well (possibly setting restrictions) rather than preventing its use entirely.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: John Podgurski, Region 1 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (617) 918-1296 or podgurski.john@epa.gov.

Barriers:

Uncertainty regarding appropriate future uses of the property; liability concerns

Solution:

Ongoing open communication between U.S. EPA and the Town; future reuse planning process

Before:

Cleaned up former chemical processing facility

After:

Future municipal amenity for the Town of Hope and surrounding communities